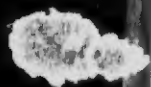
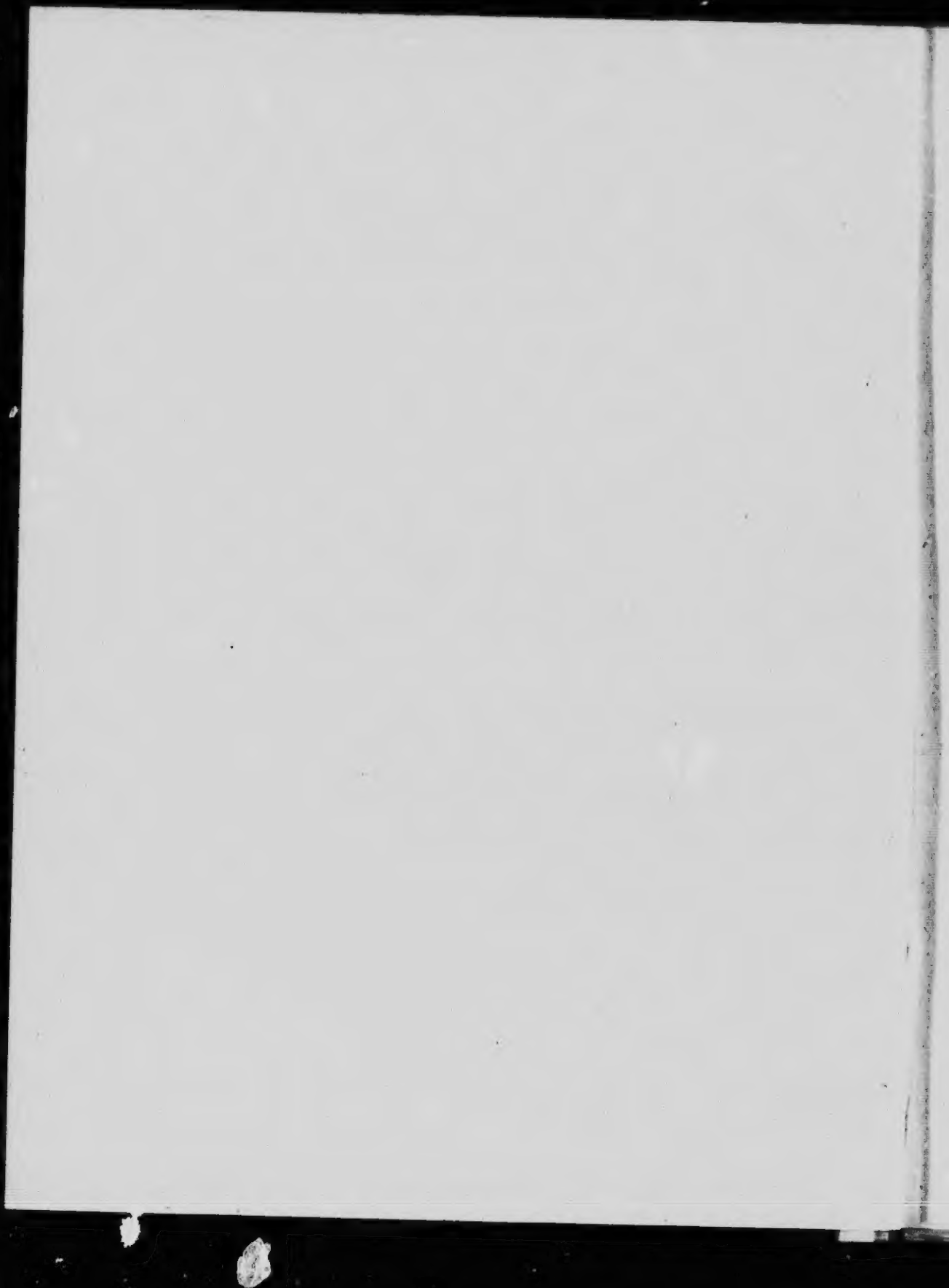


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Dr. & Mrs. Adams  
in loving memory  
of Robert Harris

October 1920





# Verses by the Way

From  
An Artist's Sketch Book

BY  
Robert Harris, R.C.A., C.M.S.

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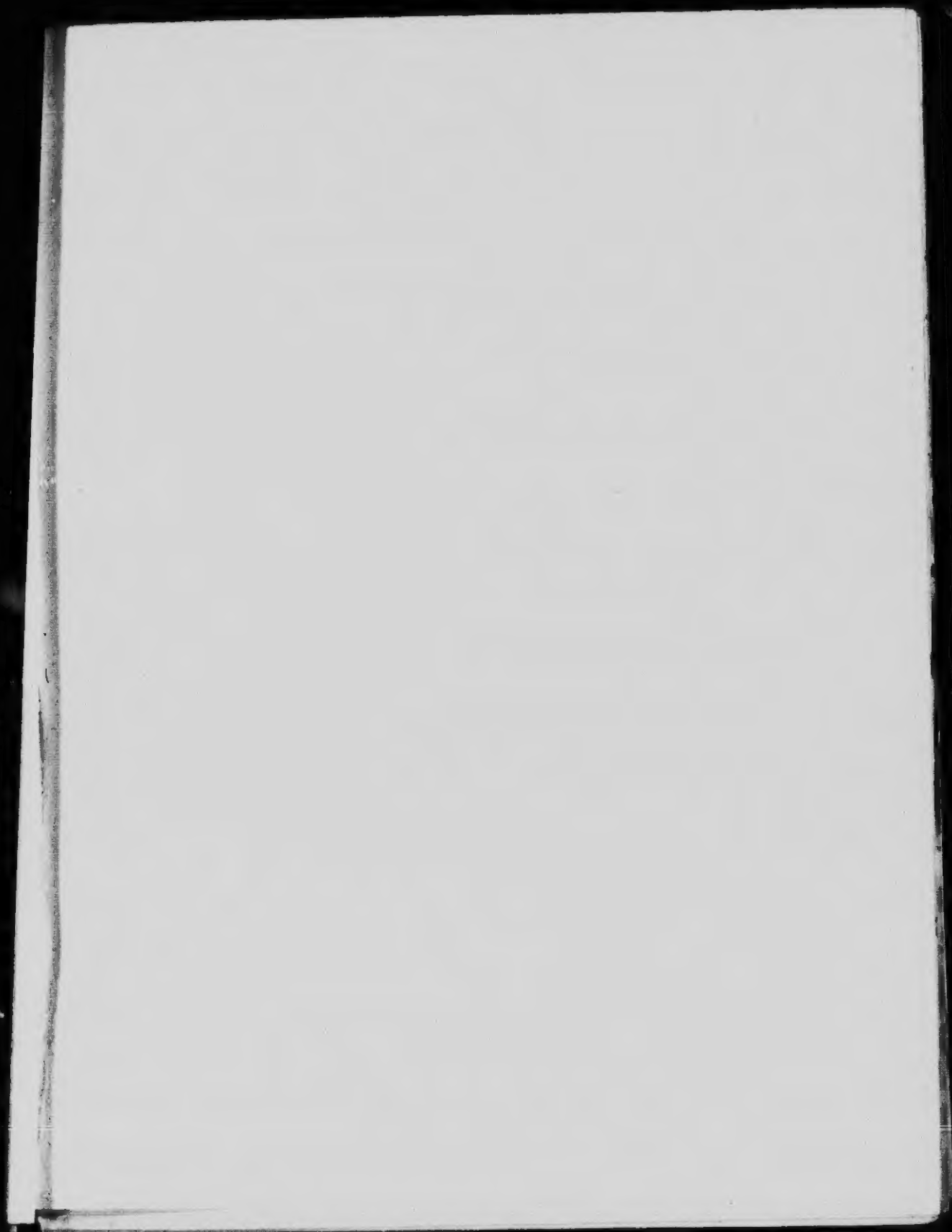
For Private Circulation

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Charlottetown, P. E. I.

1920





**ROBERT HARRIS, C. M. G., R. C. A.**

**From Portrait by himself.**

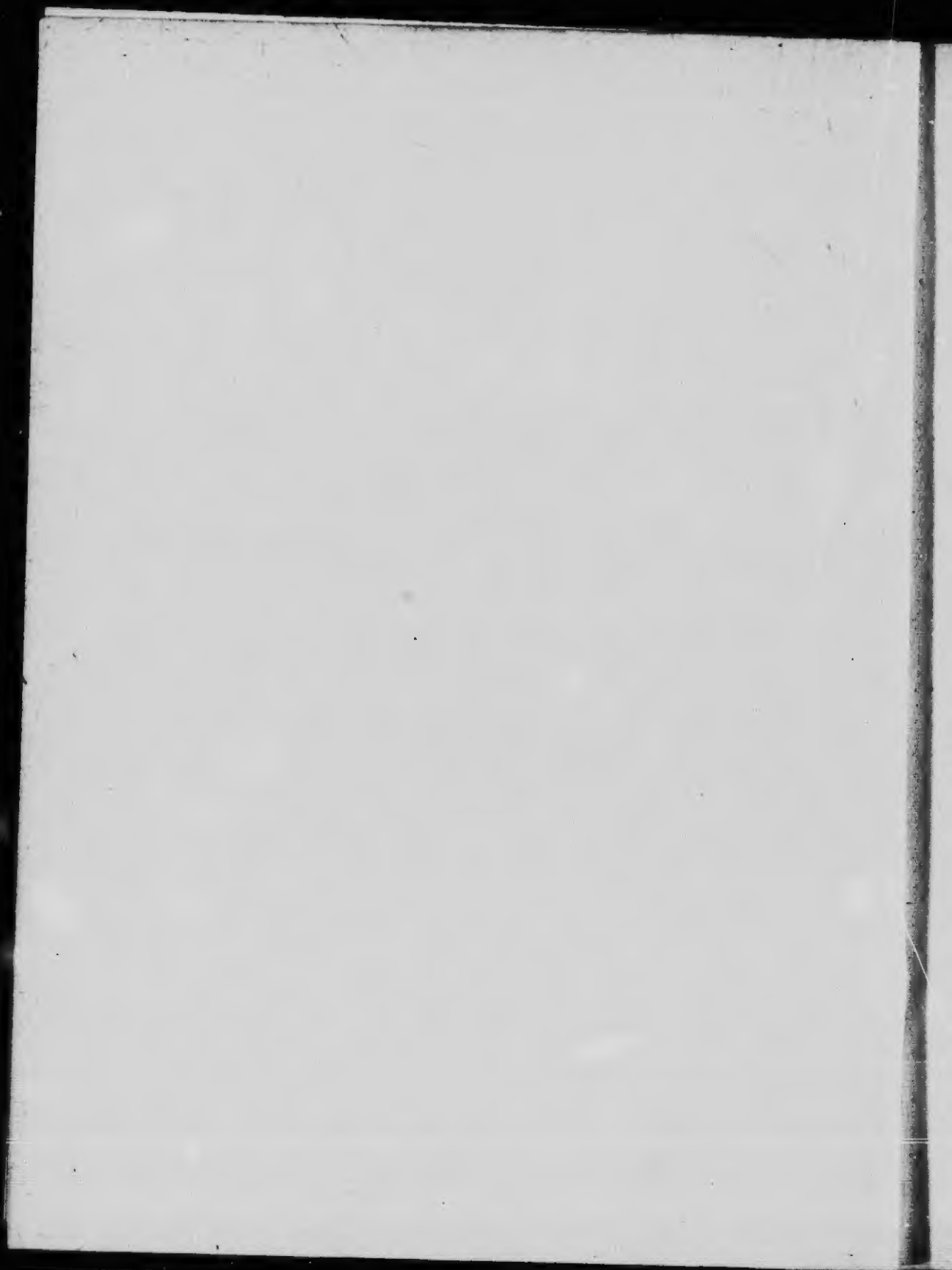
**Presented to the Art Association of Montreal**

THESE Poems, written in many places, in changing circumstances, and at different periods of the author's life, are here published by those to whom he was most dear. They express something of that deep tenderness, sympathy and understanding with which he regarded this fair world in which it has been given us to live. Some of these poems have already appeared in various periodicals, while others have been taken from notebooks where they were jotted down like little pencil sketches by the way. As such they are included here with little or no attempt at revision.



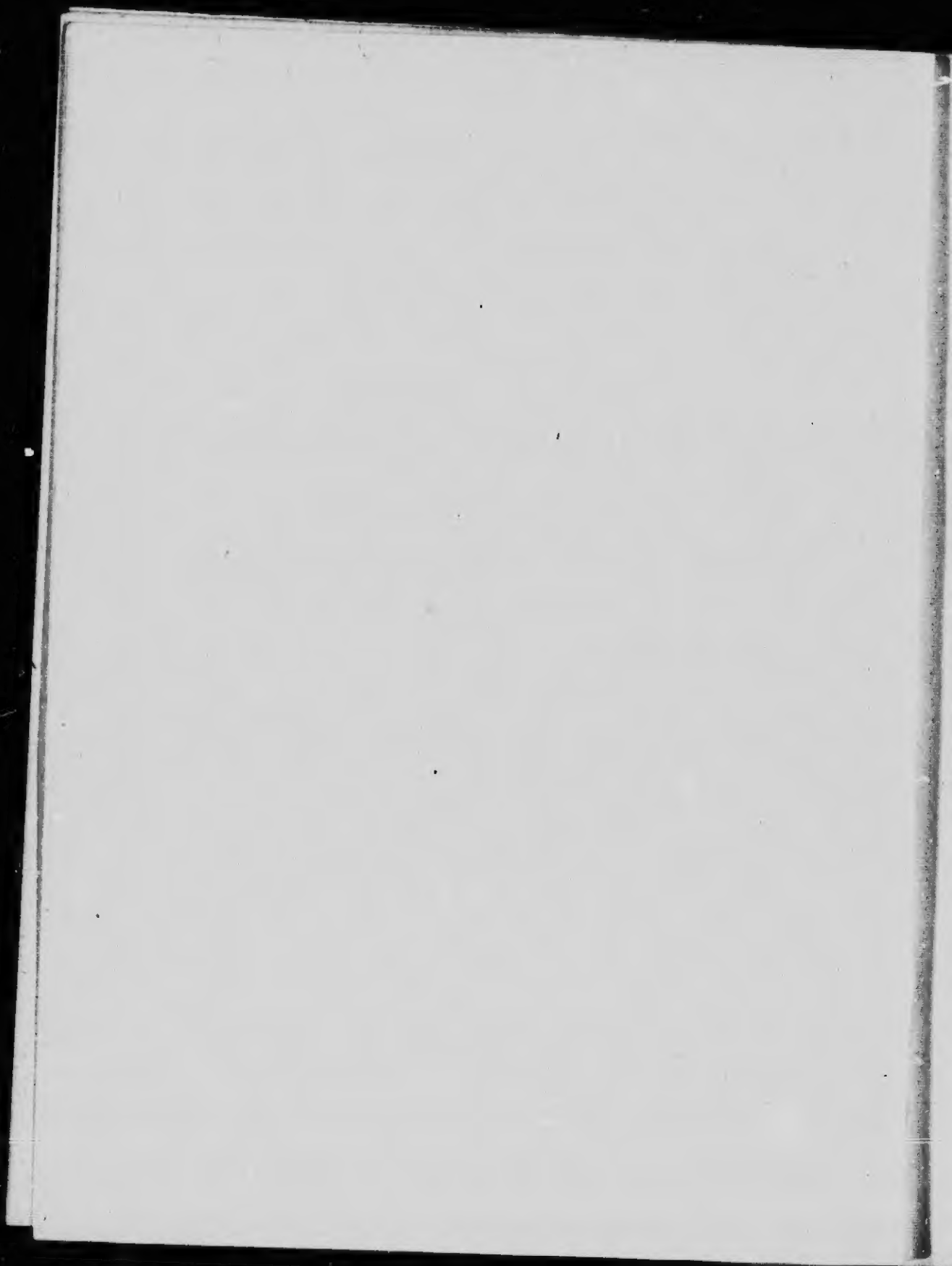
"What comes lovingly and sincerely from the heart of man  
can never fail to find an echo in the hearts of all."

— *Early Essay on Burns* by R. H.











## Verses by the Way



### Sonnet

O sun, shine out and rend the leaden cloud,  
Breezes from heaven the rugged vapours blow ;  
Disperse the glooms which now the scene enshroud,  
And living brightness on the world bestow ;  
Then, as the cheery beam thou dost restore,  
The soul replies responsive as the earth,  
And spreads her wings which folded were before,  
Rejoicing in the universal mirth : —  
For all her chords are tuned to nature's hand,  
In nature's choir book every air is set ;  
Which through the ages doth declaring stand,  
Lest we our old earth lineage should forget, —  
And teaches us when stormy skies grow fair  
Our peace doth most consist in loving her.

Lot 31, June, 1874.

292085

## VERSES BY THE WAY

*The Bar by Alberton*

While faint at eve, through sylvan ways,  
The City's gathered murmurs die,  
And voiceful of historic days  
Her towers oppose the pallid sky,  
A fainter strain entrancing more,  
In memory's mystic world floats on,  
The echoes of the surges roar  
About the bar by Alberton.

Oh far away! Oh far away,  
Though tones from old cathedral bells  
Steal sweetly forth, give me to stray  
Where the dark wave resounding swells  
Against the fir trees' solemn gloom,  
To see day's level fires grow wan  
And hear the billows' sullen boom  
About the bar by Alberton.

Recalling faded days of yore,  
When wide the unbroken forest lay  
Primeval to the northern shore;  
And the lone Indian on his way  
Heard the deep voice his sires had known;  
Or, when his evening camp fires shone,  
Caught the Atlantic's ceaseless moan  
About the bar by Alberton.

When weary home the reapers go  
And Hesper's dewy light is born,  
Or autumn's moon beams soft and slow,  
Draw dials round the sheaves of corn,  
Southward o'er inner tracts and far  
Mysterious murmurs wander on,  
The sound of waves that fret the bar,  
The sandy bar by Alberton.

Spent in the misty voids of night  
No western gale that murmur brings,  
So pleasures die and dreams of light  
In clouds decay, the spirit sings  
Its sad refrain by life's dull shoal,  
Of many a golden summer gone,  
In echoes of the surges roar  
About the bar by Alberton.

Written in the Bois de Boulogne, Paris.



### Lines on a Canadian Stream.

There is a stream in distant lands,  
That through the wildwood floweth,  
Green on its banks the maple stands  
And lithe the alder groweth ;  
And gloaming birches fleck the shade  
Where solemn pines obscure the glade.

## VERSES BY THE WAY

Through the long summer days no sound  
But nature's woodland voices  
Disturbs the dropping silence round,  
While the soft stream rejoices  
Adown its leaf-embowered way  
With peaceful woodland roundelay.

And when the falling night glooms creep  
O'er all its pleasant places,  
When dark, mysterious shadows steep  
In black its silver spaces,  
Still with that sweet accordant song  
It murmurs through the night along.

In memory seated by its marge  
Life's devious road seems clearer ;  
All beautiful things are writ more large  
And all things good grow nearer ;  
All constant things and true I see  
Reflected in its purity.

Type of a calm confiding soul  
Accepting ways before it,  
In joys whose waters constant roll,  
Or when fate's night lies o'er it  
Cheered on by airs which never cease  
The music of a mind at peace.

**Christmas Eve — London — 1876**

Now when the mist-beleaguered city's gloom:  
 Saddens the night which deepens towards that morn,  
 When angel visions sweetly did illumine  
 The shepherd's slumber, singing "Christ is born,"  
 I'll sit me by the smould'ring fire to hear,  
 The weary wind that sobs against the pane,  
 Shut out the starless sky and drop a tear,  
 Thinking of lands far o'er the heaving main.  
 On pinions swift my brooding fancy flies;  
 The earth is broad and many lands I ween,  
 She might essay where brightness never dies,  
 Songs never cease and nature smiles serene,  
 Where beauteous flowerets scent the balmy night,  
 Or the pale ilex murmurs in the breeze,  
 Or coral reefs spread peaceful in the light  
 Of spangled heavens which smile on quiet seas,  
 Far in the South might fold her wings and note  
 Isles yet untrod or Afric's palmy strand,  
 Or on the sacred waves of Ganges float,  
 Or in lone forests of the Aztec land,  
 Muse o'er the crumbling blocks which tell its tale,  
 And build the past again, beneath the moonlight pale.  
 But ah, no wavering course my fancies take;  
 Swift o'er the wild Atlantic's surging foam,  
 Westward they speed where the dark billows break

On ice-bound shores, the ice-bound shores of home :  
What though the groves are songless, though the fields,  
Cold in bleak winter's livery now are drest,  
Though sea and stream to his chill sceptre yield,  
And every gable bears his pendant crest ;  
No noisome fogs pollute the lucid air,  
How bright the day, and when the day retires,  
How bright auroral colours, flushing fair,  
Suffuse the North with palpitating fires.  
To me the fir trees' sombre shade is dear  
When pale at eve the snow-clad pastures lie,  
Oft have I marked their jagged crests uprear  
In serried lines, dark on the wintry sky,  
Have watched the tender tintings on the snow,  
Where the high drift its foamless wave deprest,  
Or marked the fleecy flakes descending slow,  
Or whirling wildly o'er the river's breast.  
Now, as the night here shrouds each gloomy pile,  
Far in the West I see the sun go down,  
Crimson the cliffs which guard my well-loved isle,  
And gild the lowly spires of Charlottetown :  
I see the pines on Elliot's banks that grow,  
On the rough point each wind-torn spruce can spell,  
Mark where Strathalbyn darkens o'er the snow,  
Or Bonshaw's hills the far horizon swell :  
I hear the jocund sleigh bells silvery sound,  
See the smooth runners glancing in the light,



And well known casements glowing red around,  
 While the pale stars loop up the robe of night.  
 Oh, would that wishes might my willing feet,  
 Speed to the strand and bridge the distance o'er,  
 And, by one cheerful hearth, my vacant seat  
 Give me but now, as oft in years before ;  
 Then, as in years before, should Christmas prove,  
 Though bright with mirth, yet brighter still with love.



### Dream On Young Heart

"Dream on young heart that life is gay,"  
 Think not of change or pain,  
 But think each hour that glides away  
 As bright returns again ;  
 Dream that the rose, that flushes now  
 Loved cheeks, will never fade,  
 Nor sorrow cloud the radiant brow  
 For faith and love betrayed.

Dream on young heart in boundless hope  
 While life's fair landscape glows,  
 Nor faltering fear the treacherous slope  
 Where the dark cypress grows ;  
 Dream that with pinions ever strong

## VERSES BY THE WAY

The aspiring soul shall rise,  
And all its paths be cheered by song  
Towards some fair Paradise.

Dream on young heart, too soon, alas,  
Fate's mournful voice now dumb  
Shall bid the flowers of springtime pass,  
And storms of winter come ;  
Dream on young heart, for only those  
Who once such dreams have known,  
In memory's perfume find the rose  
When all its bloom has flown.

3rd March, 1908.

(Made for a tune of which only the words of the first line  
were remembered.)



## The Wild Bee

I saw the wild bee in the spring  
Speed forth to work on vigorous wing,  
And heard the feathered builders sing  
At work in every glade ;  
All life confessed a hidden power,  
The earth responded to the hour,  
While, glancing heavenward, many a flower  
The promise fair displayed.

I mused upon the ways of man  
How fair, how bright his course began  
And, in his eyes, life's little span  
Was lengthened to an age ;  
And grand ambitions unrepressed  
And hopes unbounded filled his breast,  
Firm-footed, eager-eyed, he pressed  
To snatch at fortune's gage.

Again when summer suns were bright  
I watched the bird and insect flight  
And marked their never sere delight  
In all the pastures fair ;  
In every dell the wild flowers grew,  
The earth was decked in festal hue,  
The breezes that refreshing blew  
With incense freighted were :

But when I looked on man, his brow  
With stains of care was painted now  
Where disappointment's iron plough  
It's cursed share had sent :  
Hope like a meteor born to die  
Had faded from his darkened sky,  
No cheering light could he descry,  
His looks were downward bent.

## VERSES BY THE WAY

The winter came and all were gone,  
But still I knew in chambers lone  
The wild bee hid, his drowsy tone  
Again should glad the ear,  
And softly from the southward heard  
Fancy could note the gay-voiced bird  
In groves that by soft winds are stirred,  
Where flowers bloom all the year ;

But man's impassioned heart was still,  
His burning hopes, his mighty will  
Laid with his bones beneath the hill  
Where weeds and tangle grow,  
And glimering, from his grave set free  
A flickering light there seemed to be,  
But that perchance was phantasy—  
Some hope of long ago.

1875



## Song

When I come home again my love,  
When I come home to thee,  
The westering gale shall fill my sail,  
The blue waves dance in glee ;

The sea birds shall as couriers fly  
To point the way to land,  
Thy smile so bright the beacon light  
Beside the happy strand.

A fig for fame, ambition's vain,  
These realms of antique date  
Though dear to music, art and song  
Are loved by me too late ;  
Our country wears a homlier dress  
Beneath a purer air,  
By dreams of childhood sanctified,  
My heart, my heart is there.

Winter of 1882.  
Paris—39 Rue de Douai.



### The Pretty Girl Across the Way

When in the evening's russet glow  
Soft clouds stretch far, and from the bay  
The sounds of distant music flow,  
The pretty girl across the way  
To the high lattice brings her chair  
To muse, while twilight shades the lane,  
With folded hands and wistful face  
Does it speak joy ? or is it pain ?

## VERSES BY THE WAY

Through drooping leaves of chestnut trees  
In dusk and dark I see her there,  
Sometimes a letter on her knees  
But always with a pensive air;  
And till the stars come out aloft  
And every flush has left the sky  
She sits, and in the silence oft  
I think I hear her gently sigh.

What does she muse on, eve by eve?  
Does hope to her some tale unfold—  
Where love and fancy interweave  
Bright arabesques of pearl and gold?  
Or does she dream of pleasures gone,  
Now vanished as the gaudy day,  
When childhood's steps were light upon  
The new-born flowers of blushing May?

Or does some dim prophetic tone  
Come to her from the future years,  
Borne as the storm-swept ocean's moan  
The fisher's wife in trembling hears;  
Or is she learning wisdom's lore  
Beneath the evening's quiet sky,  
Ere life's first radiant flush is o'er  
Turning on fate a tranquil eye?

Far from the sunlight's glittering show,  
 Seeking the vales where tumults cease  
 Where only simple violets grow  
 Beside the hallowed paths of peace,  
 Fair thoughts are hers ; whate'er they be  
 I would not know,—tis better far  
 Her mutely wistful eyes to see  
 Communing with the evening star.

Oh, Hesper ! let thy placid light  
 Guide well with mild illuming ray,  
 O'er life's wide seas, or pathway bright,  
 The pretty girl across the way.

Toronto, Sept. 1880.



### When Mars was Shining

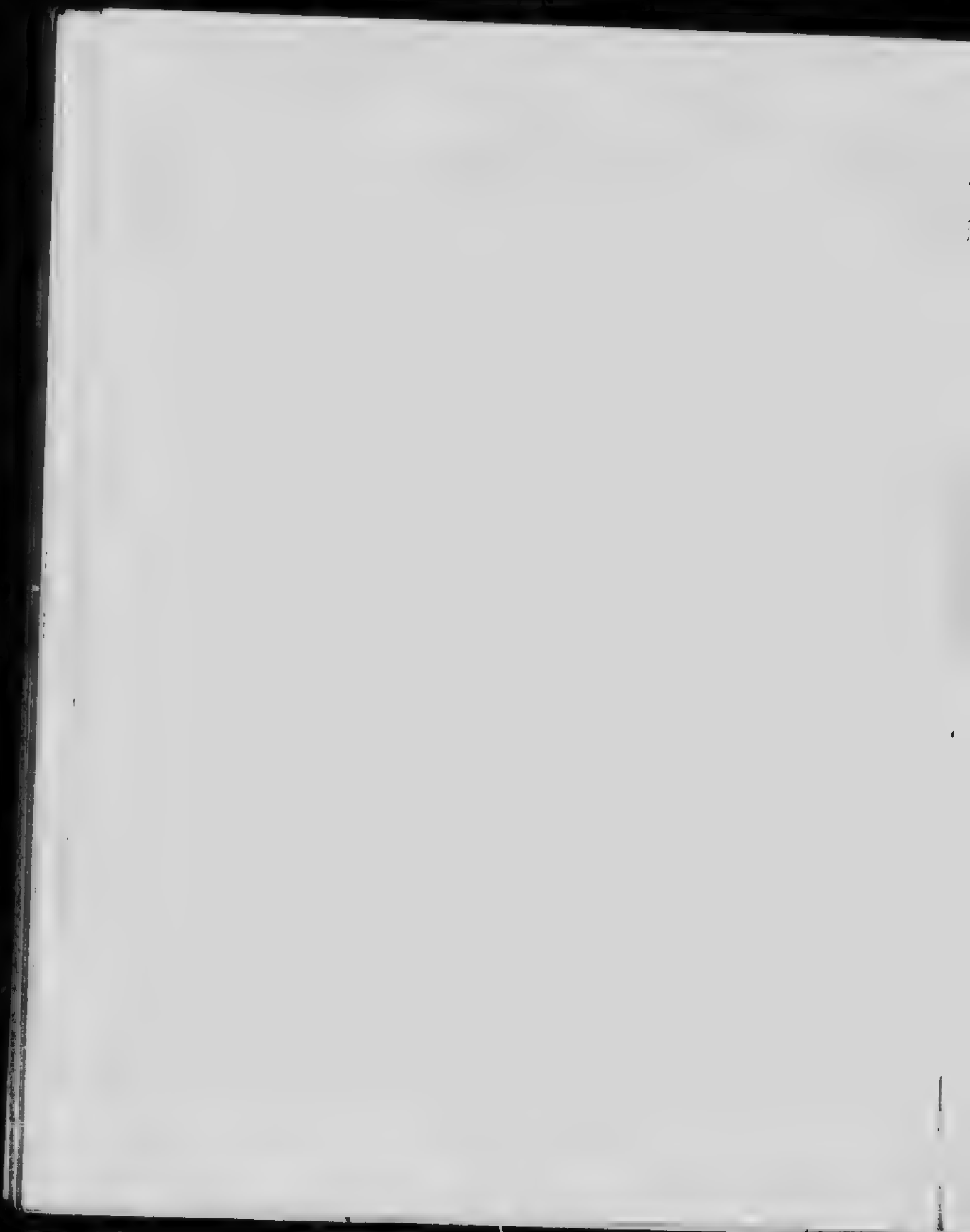
Once when fiery Mars was high,  
 When the quivering quick aurora  
 Shivered up the autumn sky,  
 Blushing to the tryst came Norah ;  
 Through the groves, and through the fern  
 O'er the barren moors I sought her  
 Till, beside the glancing burn,  
 Raptured to my heart I caught her ;

Dreaming silence round the hills  
Stole with softly waving pinions,  
Lingering round the mossy hills,  
Guarding night's serene dominions;  
Only from the headlands dim  
Came the murmured sounds of ocean  
Faintly borne as ceaseless hymn,  
Nature's voice of rapt devotion;  
And the pines that crowned the steep  
Darkly in the midnight soaring,  
Bowed like seers who vigil keep  
Aweful in their mute adoring.  
How we watched the rosy star  
O'er the dim disclosed horizon  
Far above the sandy bar  
Where the amorous billow sighs on,  
How, beneath his envious eye,  
Vows to meet in sighs were spoken,  
Ere again he climbed the sky,—  
Pledges broken, pledges broken!  
Many a sliding year has gone,  
Swiftly gone, and I remember  
Many a vanished night that shone  
In the arms of brown September;  
Oft the ferns in russet hue  
Bent their heads at autumn's warning,  
And the weary stars grown few  
Died into the misty morning;





ROBERT HARRIS  
BETWEEN 5 AND 6 YEARS



Fadeless in the enchanted land  
 Still that happy night is glowing  
 Like a fount in desert sand  
 Where the crystal spring is flowing ;  
 Like a lamp in cavern dark  
 Where the prison spirits quiver ;  
 Like an ever anchored bark  
 On an ocean bounding river ;  
 Visions from a tuneful past  
 Never dimmed by dark repining,  
 Blissful hours too bright to last  
 Once when fiery Mars was shining.

Charlottetown July 11, 1879.



### The Pilgrim

Talk not to me of hope and joy ;  
 'Tis dark without the sun,  
 When days from morn till eventide  
 Grow heavier one by one ;  
 And mournful clouds obscure the view  
 That once was bright with every hue.

That once was bright, when from afar  
 I saw the immortal band,  
 As in some fair Hesperides

Walk through a radiant land,  
Where fame's sufficing amulet  
On each aspiring brow was set.

O who could guess what lonely ways  
Lead upward to the gate,  
Or gauge the desert leagues between  
Where chill winds lurking wait,  
Or looking from afar would deem  
The cypress shadowed every stream?

For me I fain would turn aside  
And see the world go by;  
Too late to join the jostling throng  
I mark them with a sigh;  
Too late to give, too late to gain  
The zest of life which stifles pain.

Oh fate who lit my student lamp  
O'er art's inspiring page,  
And firmly took my boyish hand  
To go on pilgrimage;  
The ways you chose though paths of peace  
Grow lonely as the years increase.

Christmas 1883.

**Paraphrase—Psalm 23**

Awake my soul with joy divine,  
Thy shepherd is the Lord,  
How can I lack when he vouchsafes  
His care and cheering word?

Upon the verdant pasture's slope  
Led by His hand I'll feed;  
He where refreshing waters flow,  
My steps shall gently lead.

He shall convert my wandering soul  
And bring me on the way  
Of righteousness; His power supreme  
Shall brighten all the day.

Yea, though my footsteps tread alone  
Death's shadowy vale, I'll see  
Light through the darkness, for Thy rod  
And staff shall comfort me.

Life-giving food Thou shalt provide;  
Thy watchful love shall give  
Strength to oppose who trouble me,  
While in Thy laws I live.

## VERSES BY THE WAY

Thy gentle hand shall spread the balm  
Upon my aching brow,  
My cup of life be filled with peace,  
All, all its source art Thou.

Thy mercy shall encompass me  
Through all my wand'ring life,  
Thy loving kindness follow me  
All through the toilsome strife.

Oh! from Thy fore-court here below  
Draw me, dear Lord, above  
To dwell for evermore within  
The temple of Thy love.

Sept. 28th, 1872.



## The Closing Year

Are the bright hours forever gone?  
The closing year  
Still bears their gentle memories on,  
Their shades appear,  
Down the pale vistas of the past  
Too blest to stay  
They slid away  
But ah! how fast.

From all in youth's enchanted zone  
 The mutual joy  
 Circled like wavelets from a stone;  
 No spirits coy  
 Guarded the portals of the soul;  
 As arrows sent  
 The affections went  
 Forth to the whole.

Too conscious now alone each stands  
 Confronting fate;  
 As some poor exile bound for distant lands,  
 Though lingering late,  
 At length has said, farewell, and with a sigh  
 Turned his dim eyes  
 Where ocean lies,  
 To voyage mournfully.

Christmas, 1883.



### A Priceless Gift

When man from Eden's bowers was sent,  
 His primal home,  
 And on the blighted earth below  
 Condemned to roam,

One holiest gift to him was given,  
One comfort when by tempest driven,  
One guide to lead him back to heaven  
O'er life's wild foam.

A coal from heavenly altar fires,  
Bright fires above,  
The Father placed within his breast,  
His holy Dove,  
With wings of mercy fanned the flame  
All nature kindled where it came,  
And angels whispering breathed its name,—  
They called it love.

June 4th. 1873.



### Utopia

Utopia! land sometimes disclosed  
To every thoughtful mind,  
Where is the path, o'er wastes between,  
Towards thy haven kind?

Alas I fear Utopian land  
We never shall explore,  
Or bring our barks to anchorage  
Beside its pleasant shore.



No splendid deep reality  
 Across Atlantic waves,  
 No coral reef or land of palms  
 Which sparkling ocean laves.

Mirages from the desert born  
 Deceive our longing sight.  
 By hope and fancy pictured forth  
 In glittering lines of light.

The tangled mass of Adam's race  
 Still seek the upward road,  
 And stumble on along the path  
 Which their forefathers trod.

Sad, sad, we sigh, if only this  
 One point was surely gained,  
 This trouble gone, and had we but  
 That wished-for good attained.

Then sorrow's sting was blunted quite  
 And sure content was ours,  
 Peace, perfect, full of fadeless rest,  
 Beneath Arcadian bowers.

But, oh! 'tis distance lends the charm,  
 With it the spell departs,  
 Dissatisfaction comes again  
 To prey upon our hearts.

Ah! trust not to these visions bright,  
They glance and flee away,  
The present time, if rightly felt,  
Is fair as any day.

Yet, if our vision was not strained  
Utopia to descry,  
How many a blooming tract we'd miss  
Which searching brings us nigh.

And, if before us speeds the goal  
As upward flies the fire,  
Pursuing it we're rising too  
And ever mounting higher.

Utopia! land sometimes disclosed  
To every thoughtful mind,  
Where is the path o'er wastes between  
Towards thy haven kind?

March, 1872.



**Oh, Why Bemoan!**

Oh, why bemoan  
The time-forged chain of fate  
Through early hours and late?  
Peace is not flown;  
Within the soul it lives like a pale star  
Above the storm, until the dark clouds far  
Aside be blown.

What though without  
The storms of life may rage,  
And misery's hand presage  
And part the route,  
Sorrow on the hearth sits near the hearths of all,  
All human eyes shed tears, sore leaves must fall  
Our path about.

Who would be wise  
Must learn to love and look  
On nature as a book;  
Each life supplies  
But one short strain to help or mar the rhyme—  
Of little note across the gulfs of time  
To others' eyes.

Let us be still  
And rest our weary hands;  
For us stretch earth's fair lands  
O'er plain and hill;  
For us the green woods wave, the wild flowers blow,  
The skies change ever and the soft streams flow,  
From many a rill.

Nature hath set  
Perennial beauties round our life  
Which soothe the soul, no strife  
No vain regret,  
No sordid worldly care can steal away  
Nor dim their quiet gospel,—day by day  
It comforts yet.

Toronto, Feb. 1881



### *Fra Beato Angelico*

Art has it's saints, it's canonized,  
Whose wings were never shorn,  
Who held their steep and upward flight  
Through plaudits and through scorn.

Of such was he the pious monk  
Of peaceful Fiesolé,  
With patient hand he wrought his works,  
His heart as pure as they.

To God he dedicated art,  
And unto him was given  
To view the angel faces fair,  
And paint the joys of heaven.

He did not feel ambition's sting  
Or strive in courts to please,  
His world in still Valdarno lay  
Among the ilex trees.

His cell was thronged with visitants  
In purest robes arrayed,  
God's saints and seraphs walked with him  
Adown the cloister glade.

His sermons glowed in heavenly hues,  
In eloquence sublime,  
Their warnings and their words of hope  
Still echo on through time.

Silent, yet like the Saviour's look  
Which Peter's heart recalls,  
The saintly painter's spirit speaks  
From out the time-worn walls.

I love to think upon his life,  
So peaceful grand and pure,  
Unvexed by jars of earthly strife,  
His hopes, his joys secure.

God's saint, he trod the upward path  
Endued with heavenly grace,  
And the same light which Stephen saw  
Beamed down upon his face.

One of that band in every time  
Who point us up above,  
Soared to a healthier, happier clime  
And draw us there by love.

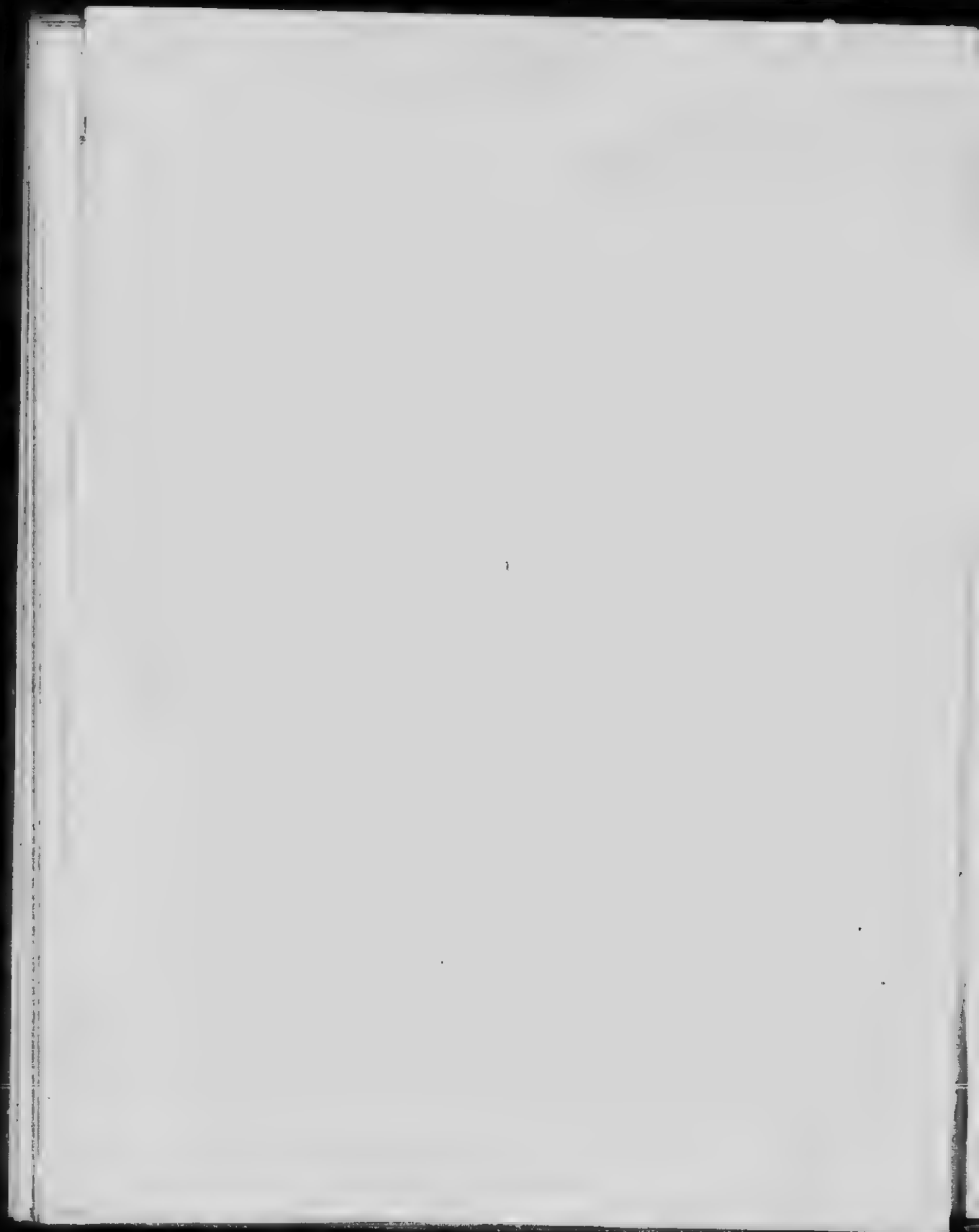
He lived that deep ideal life,  
And his rapt spirit knew  
The mightiness of things unseen,  
And looked these shadows through.

June, 1873.





ROBERT HARRIS  
ABOUT 19 YEARS





Giotto

When Giotto on the Tuscan hills cared for his sheep  
And scrawled on stone,  
He hardly knew, wherefore he drew  
When quite alone,  
It added zest to rest?  
No doubt; yet to himself he said not so—  
The little boy simply felt joy  
Which could not cloy to see the picture grow.

\* \* \* \* \*

And when again in haunts of men  
When Cimabue planted him in town,  
When great renown had settled down  
Upon his head; then all the more  
He struggled o'er his plaster planes  
Taking such pains as he ne'er did before,  
To put his story on the wall, so all  
That saw might understand it, as they did;  
But did he ever as the years went by  
To something further on draw nigh—  
To what he would? But there he never got.  
Ah! happy lot, still to aspire; the sacred fire  
To glow still bright while any breath of life remains.

**On a Picture by J. D. Watson**

Over the wasted moor they went  
Their weary way,  
His face was grim against the sky  
And brooding memories fixed his eye;—  
She ever wept most bitterly,—  
Ah! dreary day.

Cold in its shroud between them borne  
Their treasure lay,  
And grief clung round it like a pall,  
While by the ruined churchyard wall  
They crept a simple funeral—  
Ah! dreary day.

Forth from their humble cottage door  
'Neath hawthorn spray,  
No more to come with gladness home  
From toiling in the furrowed loam,  
Their joy has sunk 'neath life's wild foam—  
Ah! dreary day.



### A Picture by Rembrandt

I wonder who he was, this strange young man,  
 Out of the deeps of melancholy eyes  
 On Rembrandt's canvas he is looking forth,  
 As though he searched a friend whom he had lost,  
 And hoped to find amid the passing crowd;  
 And many stop and stand before him long  
 And peer into the sadly smiling face.



### Time's Vistas

Down the dim vistas of far time,  
 From sorrow free and crime  
 The future days shall be,  
 The souls of the just on earth  
 Shall live in light, as the birth  
 Of morning lights the sea.

No more as in these barren days  
 When by the gates of praise  
 Imposters place the throne,  
 And modest minded worth  
 Is frightened through the earth  
 By trumpets coarsely blown.

O days of a happier date,  
Life slips—we cannot wait—  
In the hills are sounds of night  
And the deepening shadows grow ;  
O days we can never know  
Of rest and peace and light.

Toronto, April, 1880.



### The Dream Land

Not long ago, I sat beside the shore  
And looked away across the hollow sea,  
To where the dim dream mountains faintly rose  
A far, far land, a land of mystery.

Oft-times the level sailing clouds went by  
And almost hid its outlines from my view,  
But when the sunlight touched its hill tops high,  
Musing, I watched the tints of dusky blue.

And oft I dreamed of what its strand might be,  
What trees grew there, what flowers perfumed its gales  
And imaged scenes, in happy fantasy,  
Of murmuring brooks and deeply shadowed vales.

But nothing of it did I understand  
For all my guessings; should I sail away  
In some light shallop to that unknown strand?  
Perchance I said, t'would be an evil day.

For I might find cold cliffs and wintry airs  
And angry surges guarding all the coast,  
And in my shattered craft drift in despair  
Nor come to land again, and so be lost.

Therefore, I said, I will not venture out  
But dream upon its beauties from afar;  
Till one still season when I mused in doubt  
I thought there rose a steady shining star

Which promised guidance fair; I could not stay,  
My heart was for that venture o'er the waves,  
I trimmed my sail and soon in harbour lay  
Secure and safe from any storm that raves.

And found the land beyond all speaking fair  
With beauty far beyond my sweetest dream,  
And so I made my home, continued there,  
Abode and found it happiness supreme.

How many hours of weariness and pain,  
When all the lights of life were far withdrawn,  
Had never been for me,—ah well! they were  
But the chill hours that usher in the dawn.

gales

es.

And now the dawn has come ; yes, day itself.  
 Oh, I had never thought the world would seem  
 So beautiful to me ; though bright it was  
 It was but as the sunshine in a dream.

Feb. 15th, 1885



### Christmas Eve

I'll drink a toast ; yes, sitting here alone,  
 The rumble of the boulevard close by,  
 Six stories up, a lightly burning fire  
 And, through the studio window, broad and high  
 The midnight sky with stars that glimmer frostily ;  
 Just as they shone before my childish eyes  
 When fancy saw the singing angels come,  
 And heard the flutter of their waving wings.

\* \* \* \* \*

Long live the memory, with all heart say I  
 Of Christmas eves gone by, their friendship, love,  
 Romance, and all the airs from dim poetic realms  
 Hung round the paths of life to sanctify ;  
 No doubting then of grand ideal aims,  
 But with all faith the uplifted soul received  
 The purity and beauty of the past ;  
 The earth was as a temple round whose walls  
 Were written messages of truth and peace ;  
 Not we alone, but all our fathers gone

Joined in the carols of that happy time,  
 And I remember when we sang amidst the snow,  
 (The choir boys singing as we went to church,  
 To midnight service), how it seemed to me  
 The choirs of long gone days sang with us too  
 The carol of the "good King Wenceslaus."  
 Oh! they were not illusions, those old dreams;  
 We talk of knowledge gained and we despise  
 The sweet traditions of an older date.  
 But tell me, friends, was life not nobler then?  
 As we know more—how oft the sanctity,  
 The beauty and the peace take to them wings,  
 And ere a man has gone far on his road  
 He sees them vanish in the distant blue.

Paris, 39 Rue de Douai, 1882.



### In Autumn

Sadly the autumn showers descend,  
 And gurgling streamlets thread the plain;  
 O'er the gray waste the chill winds sigh,  
 As some worn sufferer, faint with pain,  
 Slow dying on a lonely bed,  
 Too weak to hope, too weak to pray,  
 Moans as he turns his fading face  
 And sighs his soul away.

Far round the sombre mists are spread,  
They dull the throbbing of the sea,  
Stain the bleak moors, and veil the woods  
That cluster on the distant lea;  
And, fatal as the python's breath  
When riding neath Apollo's dart,  
They cling in poisoning folds around  
And coil within the heart.

And through the many vapours rise  
The beckoning shades from other years,  
Old friends whose laughter now is spent,  
Who quaffed the dregs of life in tears;  
And o'er the flowerless paths of earth,  
Once glad with mirth and bright with song,  
The ghostly visions of the past  
In pale processions sweep along.

They sweep along nor ever stay,  
The phantom joys that bind me here,  
A straggler in life's harvest field  
When all his comrades disappear;  
Oft as the silence deeper falls  
Remote he hears the vanished band  
And their faint music's fitful swell  
Sounds hollow through the darkened land.



**There Lived a Man**

There lived a man,—twas long ago—  
 His bones are now where daisies grow—  
 Who loved a maiden of the land  
     And loved her well ;  
 And ever to himself he said,  
 When morn was gray or evening red ;  
 "Tis now I'll ask her heart and hand ;"  
     But what befell ?

Some cause he saw from day to day  
 That vexed him with a vain delay  
 Now she was merry, then too sad,  
     Or kept apart ;  
 He told himself 'tis not the hour,  
 Or signs he saw through fancy's power  
 That made him deem no place he had  
     Within her heart.

A smile from her, or kindly word  
 And all his quickened spirit stirred,  
 The burning vows were on his tongue  
     And just to fall ;  
 She looked at, spoke to others near  
 And all the surging waves of fear  
 Cried to his heart with sorrow wrung,  
     She cannot love at all.

So time went swiftly stealing by,  
He marked it going with a sigh  
And yet his heart, with soft intent,  
Was constant still ;  
But doubts, suspense, and foolish fears  
Companioned with it all the years,  
Till all the golden days were spent  
With changing will.

He died, and in the churchyard old  
They made his grave, and from the mould  
Above his breast the flowers grew fast ;  
And oft there came  
A woman with a fading face  
And hair grown grey to tend the place,  
And ever thinking on the past  
To breathe his name.

Saturday Night, Jan. 10th 1885.



### Retrospection

How oft in stifling city ways  
Come thoughts of long departed days,  
Far from the garnered past ;  
When nature in her kindest mood  
Swayed all the heart and life imbued  
With joys too deep to last.

VERSES BY THE WAY

11

Far from the city's anxious throng,  
Where palsied pleasures lure along,  
Or want and woe destroy,—  
In country glades and pastures fair  
The happy hours, unmarked by care,  
Flew gilt with nature's joy.

And as I dream with vain regret,  
Memories of old come trooping yet  
And scenes more blest recall,  
The spirit wings its backward flight  
Into the silences of night,  
And lifts the folded pall.

The eye in vision quickened, sees  
The winding road, the tall fir trees,  
In twilight shadows still,  
The darkened fields, the murmuring stream,  
The cottage windows lonely gleam  
Dim on the distant hill.

Such scenes shall live when joys decay  
Fast fleeting as the dolphins play,  
Unfixed as ocean foam,  
And, oft as memory tells her store,  
Return, though on an alien shore  
Our distant feet may roam.

For kindled feeling can bestow  
Odours which make the ashes glow  
And all the past embalm ;—  
Like some rare spics whose fragrant breath  
Can stay the grace of life in death  
And fix the fleeting charm.

Dec. 1873.



### Memories

Again, as in the years gone by,  
Again, at eve I stray,  
Where oft in youth and childhood's hours  
My footsteps found their way.

The night wind sighs, the sun is set ;  
As, oft before, I see  
The saddened splendours of the west  
Behind the ancient tree.

On all the far horizon round  
The sombre shadows fall,  
Mysterious glooms enfold the scene  
And sadness speaks in all.

*VERSES BY THE WAY*

45

And every wailing wandering breath  
That sighs along the plain,  
Comes freighted with the thoughts of years  
That cannot come again.

Oh ! memory opes her echoing caves  
The past returns in power,  
And peaceful melancholy rules  
In twilight's holy hour.

May, 1878.



*After Sunset, Near Charlottetown*

In deepening tones the lights decay  
And twilight through the meadow roves ;  
One guardian star of crystal ray  
Hangs trembling o'er the shadowy groves,  
The fir grows dark with plummy spears  
Which hide the streamlet wandering on  
Through scenes, beloved in happy years—  
Forever gone, Forever gone.

I hear the cowbells tinkling faint,  
The murmur of the town afar,  
A bird that chaunts its soft complaint  
Down where the rustling birches are ;  
The fireflies flit on glimmering wing,  
The daisied fields are dark and lone,  
And all the wandering breezes sing—  
Forever gone, Forever gone.

'Twas here when hope and fancy's flame  
Made all the circling world seem gay,  
To calm the throbs of life I came  
By wood or verdant mead to stray ;  
And learnt to lift the adoring eye  
Where nature's meeker glories shone,  
When all the past was in the sky—  
Forever gone, Forever gone.

Fade, fade, dim light ! Beyond the plain  
Spread comfort round the weary land,  
Fierce joy's exciting pulse restrain,  
And steal the gold from sorrow's hand,  
Touch all the fields of earth with peace  
And healing dew shed gently down  
On flowers that spring from hopes which cease—  
Forever gone, Forever gone.

July, 1879.

**In the Old French Fort Near the Blockhouse,  
Charlottetown Harbor.**

In the old fort, on trench and mound,  
The clover, pink and daisies grow  
Where grim stockade and cannon frowned  
Two hundred distant years ago.

Tree branches o'er the moat are met,  
Wild roses on the ramparts blow,  
That spreading hawthorn tree was set,  
Perchance, two hundred years ago.

Where strong the massy portal rose  
And the stern challenge used to greet,  
The robins build secure from foes  
And warble round the safe retreat.

Twas here the careful sentry paced  
And anxious scanned the windy bay,  
Or far the veering frigate traced  
Speeding to Louisburg away,

And heard the booming guns afar,  
Saw on the summer skies the frown  
That marked the distant smoke of war,  
And watched the stricken ships go down :

Or saw the stealthy, slow canoe,  
Or smoke of campfire, or descried,  
Where the dark pines their shadows threw,  
The hostile Indian cautious glide.

Now in this summer sky serene  
The pastures smile, the scent of hay  
Is in the air, and spires are seen  
Where the unbroken forest lay.

Yet while the wind, with solemn tone,  
Sighs through the darkening groves of fir  
And waves that over shell and stone,  
With muffled pulses, beat the air—

The ghosts of buried soldiers come  
To man the fort: there, there! they stand—,  
Wakes the wild forest to the drum  
And bayonets point the fierce command;

Up the long slope the foemen rush,  
Desperate they meet, the Indian yell  
Startles the ear, then the sad hush  
While death patrols as sentinel.

Above their heads the long grass waves,  
What valour and what worth forgot  
Was here displaye'd the unmarked graves  
Of heroes lie around the spot.

August, 1881.



**Wind of the West**

Wind of the West, blow fresh away  
Down Elliot's sparkling tide,  
Past scenes of many a happy day,  
Through distant haze descried ;  
Blow, for in passing thou hast been,  
By all the pleasant woodlands green  
Which crown MacKenzie's hill,  
Where oft beneath the beechen shade,  
So many a twilight hour I strayed  
Or tried the pencil's skill.

And bring the airs of old romance,  
From Bonshaw's darker groves,  
Or where the jutting points advance,  
Whose edge the swallow loves :  
By many a cliff thy course has gone,  
Where the white birches clinging on,  
Still grasp the ruddy soil ;  
And bring from many a farmstead down,  
Some message to the little town,  
That breathes of country toil.

Or on the vigor of thy wing,  
From fair Strathgartney's slope  
Come like the heath flower blossoming,  
In days of ancient hope :

Mingle the airs of old and new  
Where golden rod with heather grew,  
Beside the winding stream,  
Or further from the alder shade  
Where the shy trout his haunt has made,  
Revive an angler's dream.

Or, beyond, where the river shines,  
O'er widening spaces blow,  
The odors from the mighty pines,  
Which near Strathalbyn grow,  
Whose waving woods of yore so well  
I knew, and many a lovely dell,  
To sunlight never known :  
Blow Western wind for lingering here,  
Thy voice can sadden or can cheer,  
With music of its own.

Made in Charlottetown P. E. I., Sept. 1902.



**Pownal Bay, P. C. 3.**

The August sun shone brightly,  
The wavelets rippled lightly,  
And on the sail the wind blew soft,  
That peaceful summer day ;  
The landscape round lay smiling  
To peace the soul beguiling,  
When last I looked, and sadly left,  
The shores of Pownal Bay.

The quiet homesteads lying,  
Mid sheltering trees, the vying  
Of fir crowned points with ruddy cliffs  
Round which the swallows play ;  
The lowland pastures glowing,  
And murmurous brooklets flowing  
Through gently sloping upland farms  
Encircling Pownal Bay.

All, all again returning,  
In memory's pensive yearning,  
Before me come, as fitfully  
The summer breezes stray :  
Old scenes, old hopes and pleasures,  
Restore their buried treasures ;  
The wealth of unforgotten hours,  
Of peace in Pownal Bay.

September, 1902.

### **Last Squeak of an old Town Pump.**

This is the song of a Charlottetown pump :—  
Where's the whole lot of us now ?  
Once a stout crew at the corners we stood,  
Spouting out water from nozzles of wood.  
Ah ! things change quickly ; we went with a jump,—  
Next they'll be sacking the cow.

Down with their pipes and their hydrants, say I,  
Give me the simple old way,  
Then all the boys had their buckets to draw  
Each mother's son of them learning this law :  
" Pump if you're thirsty or you must go dry,  
Work before earning your play."

Out of the forests of spruce and of pine  
Into the town we were brought,  
Hollowed with augurs and set in the ground,  
Valve, rod and handle ; Oh ! pleasant the sound  
In summer eves as we watered the kine  
E're their green pastures they sought.

Ah ! the old days, don't you think of them yet ?  
Man ! at the fires we were fine,  
When strutting wardens with sticks painted red  
Marshalled the townfolk in ranks to the head,  
Head of the pump, and we filled with a jet  
Buckets to hand down the line.

Many long years, with a clang and a creak,  
We had seen children grow men ;  
Their children's children too ; till there began  
Some silly rumours. A michievous man  
Measured our width and our depth, for a freak,  
Marked us D. W. then.

After the paint pot had labelled our sides  
D stood for " dirt " 'twas averred,  
Friends who had drunk of our waters from youth  
Fooled by analysis took it for truth,  
Sentiment falters when science derides,  
We were condemned, 'twas absurd.

Keep a fair word for us still while around,  
Ye who have gripped us of yore ;  
Mingled with memories of love and of play,  
Think of us kindly, old friends turning gray ;  
You, like the pumps, will not always be sound,  
Going as they've gone before.

Charlottetown, August, 1899.



**Evening in the Park, Toronto.**

Sweet the valley's dim repose  
Where the winding streamlet flows,  
When the stars in pale compassion  
Look upon the ways of men,  
And the city's voice of care  
Sadly on the perfumed air  
Floats, and falls again.

Now the fiery heats of day  
In the twilight die away,  
And o'er all the darkened woodlands  
Peace descending spreads around,  
Falling as the night dews fall  
On the weary hearts of all,  
With a calm profound.

Here the soul may cease the strife  
From the weary toils of life,  
Fain the goads of dull ambition  
And the burning thirst to know,  
Passion's clarion, shrills no more ;  
Faint as waves that wash a shore  
Trodden long ago.

When life's fierce joys are vanished  
Triumph and the conflict banished,  
Teach the soul a calm endurance,

Steadfast as the stars endure,  
In ideal lands to wander,  
Visions of the past to ponder  
Days when life was pure.

In those twilight lands forever  
Peace and silence walk together,  
Gliding by the lonely waters  
Soft their shadowy footsteps fell,  
And the air is full of healing  
Balms, which soothe the deep of feeling.

June, 1880.



### Rightfall .

Pensive in the western sky,  
Low the languid clouds repose,  
Copse and field in shadow lie ;  
Where the far horizon shows  
Dark against the dying light,  
Loom the woods like wards of night.

Jarring sounds of life are still,  
Labour's hands are folded down ;  
Faintly wafted o'er the hill,  
Murmurs from the distant town  
Up the haunted valley creep,  
Soft as voices heard in sleep.

If the pale eyed ghosts can hear  
O'er the icy waves of death,  
Listening troops are hovering near ;  
Every sigh that wandereth  
Up from earth, for evermore  
Floats along their lonely shore.

Nature now her awful form  
Robeth in mysterious shade,  
Stronger than the strength of storm,  
In her silent night arrayed,  
Casting through the failing eye  
Shadows of futurity.

Charlottetown, September, 1876.



### Beaurepaire

Peace and content one summer's day,  
Grown tired of street and square,  
Wandered by old Saint Lawrence banks  
And found a place so fair,  
They said "be this our camping ground"—  
Its name was Beaurepaire.



The mighty river's rushing stream  
Grows gentler passing there,  
Island and bay and far blue hills,  
Combine in prospect rare ;  
All tranquil are the shady groves  
And fields of Beaurepaire.

Far from the dusty noisy town,  
Its glitter and its glare,  
The lingering summer days go by,  
At night the soft winds bear  
The boatman's song who trims his sail  
By moonlit Beaurepaire.

Frances, by loving hearts fenced round  
In childhood's summer there,  
The hoping happy years have flown,  
May all the future wear  
The same kind face, and ever be  
Peaceful as Beaurepaire.

Lines from an album. 1901.



**Is it Worth While ?**

"Is it worth while ?" who thought it then  
In days when life was flushed with hope  
And all the frame intense and strong  
With trials only longed to cope ;  
Then, difficulties only made us smile,  
We could not think "is it worth while ?"

In the dim mornings of the spring  
Or in the wintry midnight hours  
With ever rising heart I worked  
In sunshine or in showers ;  
Nature and art with kindly smile  
Spoke to the heart, "On,—'tis worth while."

Worth while to study and to plan  
And aye aspire to higher things  
To live in spirit with the souls  
Who had sublime imaginings ;  
To live for art and truth, keep free from guile—  
Oh ! surely once "it was worth while."

Dear happy days with hopeful effort bright  
And have ye then for ever, ever flown ?  
Is no aurora left in the pale night  
Where once the steadfast stars were countless strown ;  
What chill voice whispers forth from fates dark aisle,  
When ere the spirit strives, "Is it worth while ?"

January, 1888.

### Cain and Abel

Pale, in the shadow of the altar stone,  
The victim lay. The sacrificial smoke,  
Round the dark fratricide towering alone,  
Coiled like the enthralling serpent, and outbroke  
The sweat of judgment on his haggard brow :  
The dying sun incarnadined the plain,  
As the night fell portentous. Like a vow  
Of retribution, murmured o'er the slain  
Unearthly voices. From their mountain home,  
In hollow gorges, freighted with despair  
And bitter with remorse, like furies roam  
The winds round Cain's quick ear. Swift sepulchre  
In desert sand they brought, as night's dark pall  
Nature with shuddering fingers laid o'er all.

For Pen and Pencil Club.



### At Cap a l'Aigle, after Reading A. Domett's Poem Kamouraska.

Beyond the hurrying water's darkening flow,  
The lights come out upon the distant shore.  
By Kamouraska's moonlit strand no more,  
As when he journeyed to the Western isles,  
Shall Waring come and pause beside the wave

Whose murmurous ebbings to his singing gave  
Sweet cadence. Perhaps on such an eve,  
In light calash he sped and curious scanned  
Those saddened faces from his English land,  
That crossed him where the groves of gloomy pine  
Spread their deep shadows. Still perchance remain  
The eyes which then beheld him; now with years and pain  
Grown dim and weary. Still upon the strand  
The water's sound and shine, and lofty o'er  
The mighty uplands clad in forests hoar  
Extend. All, all is as it was, but he  
Can come no more—No more.



### Castaway

Lonely on the silent ocean, hushed the tempest's wild com-  
motion ;  
Every soul of all my shipmates, sunk below with smothered  
groan :  
Worn with sorrow, I, despairing, little knowing, little caring,  
Save the horror of my faring, on that silent sea unknown ;  
Save the chilling changeless horror, felt upon that sea un-  
known—  
Help and hope together flown.

Lo, the sun with gloomy glory, dying casts his color gory.  
Like to Egypt's cursèd waters all the ensanguined sea is  
grown.

Wildly to the westward gazing, fiery forms I see uprising,  
Tost from out the awful blazing, rallying round the tyrant's  
throne

Borne from out the blasting splendour, round the dying  
tyrant's throne—

I like him must die alone.

Then the twilight shades collected, not a star the eye de-  
tected ;

Veiled in clouds of stygian darkness, gone the light, the  
glory flown.

All around the blackened billows ghastly gloomed like  
dead men's pillows,

And the gathering night winds rose, moaning like a spirit's  
sighs.

Sadly wailing rose the night winds, moaning like a lost  
soul's moan—

Storm tost lost one, thou'rt alone.

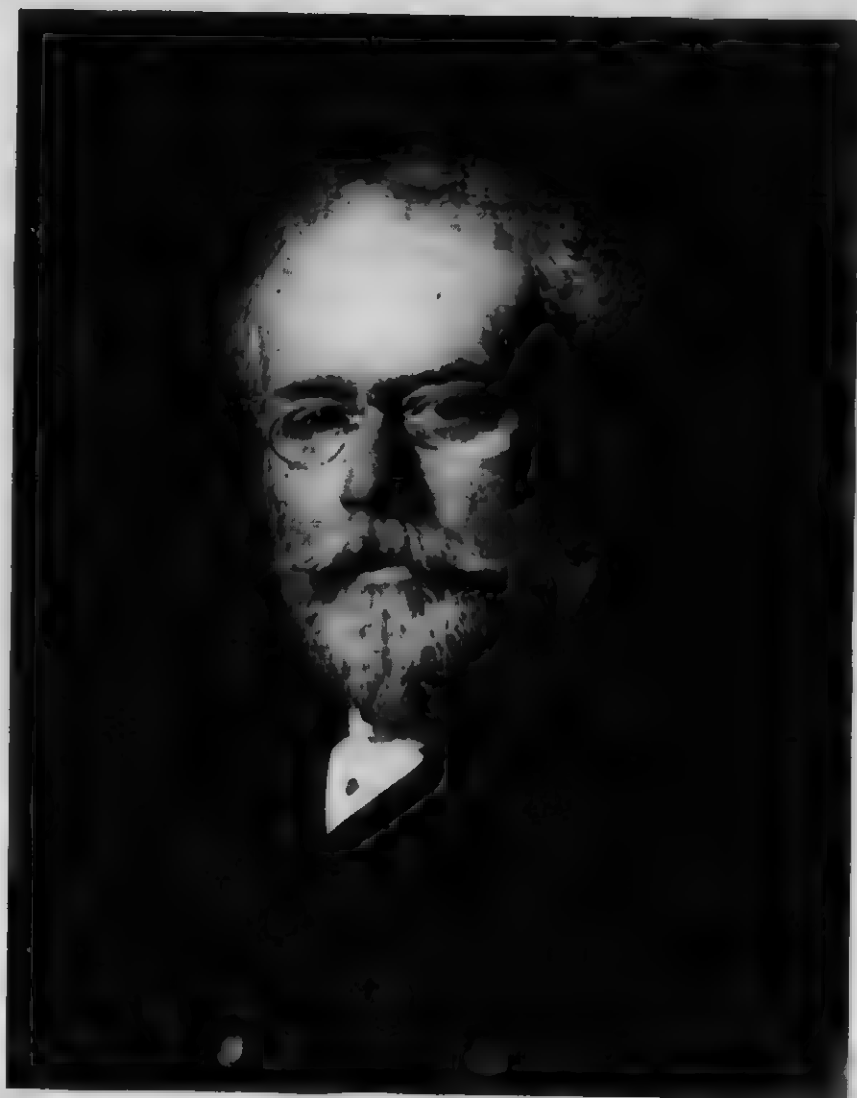
As I looked a dread came o'er me, death deck'd figures  
passed before me,

Forms of those who cold were lying, 'neath the sad sepul-  
chral stone ;

And their hollow chests were sighing dolorous death dirge  
for the dying,  
And their ashen eyeballs eying me with gaze that turned  
to stone :  
Lost upon that sea unknown.

And my shipmates thronged around me, from their biers  
below they found me  
Where the cruel seas had dragged them when the fated  
bark went down ;  
Palzied, pale my forehead kist they, never of my anguish  
wist they ;  
To their lifeless bosom prest me, till my life was almost  
gone ;  
Prest me, strained me to their bosoms, till my life was al-  
most gone—  
I with them, yet all alone.

"Comrade come, ah come," they craved, "surely thou  
would'st not be saved,  
Lost to all thy loving shipmates, in the seaweed shrouded  
lone ?"  
But I clutched my planks and pleaded, "leave, oh, leave me!"  
Then they heeded,  
Moaning as they sad receded, "brother, wilt thou voyage  
alone ?"  
Wailing as they sunk in sadness, "brother wilt thou voyage  
alone ?  
Lost upon this sea unknown."



*Robert Harris, C. M. G., R. C. A.*





Then I saw from out the glooming, deeper still a giant  
looming ;  
Surges rose at his appearing, waves and sea winds joined  
to moan.  
Hark, Oh, God, the tempest riseth ; down upon me dark it  
driveth,  
Like a knell its voice appriseth, that I helpless die alone :  
Hark, 'tis near, I feel its fury bursting on me all alone—  
Perishing, unseen, unknown.

Previous to 1884.



### Poverty

Poverty, Poverty, on we go,  
Tramping through the land ;  
Wearily, wearily, faint and slow,  
Ragged always, not much for show  
Was I at my best, when she you know,  
Poverty, gave me her hand :

When she gave me her hand, away far back,  
I was a youngster then,  
And met her first when work was slack,  
Grew restless and hopeless as things looked black,  
Then she and I took up, alack—  
And alas for the ways of men :

For it wasn't a fair and equal match,  
Her years were an untold tale,  
She was the widow of thousands : catch ?  
Aye that she could ; as the kodack's snatch,  
So sure was hers ; I joined the batch  
Who follow her beck and hail.

Since then we've tramped the stony roads,  
Old Poverty and I,  
Halting on when hunger goads,  
Toting even our rage like loads,  
And death I know it surely bodes,  
When Poverty says, good bye.

And now as I sit in the Autumn hush,  
While the old tired sun sinks low,  
A whisper comes from the dark fir bush,  
Sweet as the note of the hermit thrush,  
"Good bye old mate, no further push,—  
Your toilsome road, I go."

For sketch for Pen and Pencil Club.  
January 23rd, 1897.



### The Rooster

Oh ! rooster, in the early hour of dawn  
 Why dost thou crow ?  
 Or if thou must,  
 Can'st thou not make it low,  
 Not quite so high,  
 Oh, try.

Because, O rooster !  
 Though thy harem, lazy,  
 Thou needst must call to get them up,  
 You needn't ball,  
 There must be other ways ;  
 I beg thee try.

If thou dost find some hen  
 Who will not quit the roost, where  
 Snoring still she sits, O rooster,  
 Just boost her,  
 And if she will not get up then  
 Boost her again, O rooster,  
 But do not crow, O no,  
 O no !

For in the early morning hours  
 We fain would sleep, O rooster,  
 And ere thou came we uster,  
 But now we cannot even try

To close an eye,  
But after every crow  
Sleepless await the next one, so  
You really must shut up, O rooster,  
Or I will make of thee a feather duster,  
You shall not cock-a-doodle-me, I swear,  
O feathered fiend, O fowl, O rooster.

On train en way to B. C., June 24th, 1909.



### Abandoned

The lantern and the coal oil can  
Were sitting on the strand,  
Just where the campers put them down  
Mid heaps of stone and sand.

"Do you suppose," the lantern said,  
"The parson's gang is gone?"  
"I greatly fear," the can replied,  
"That we are left alone."

The lantern dropped a bitter tear—  
"What if the tide comes in?"  
"It will be hard," replied the can,  
"As sure as I'm a tin."

"Though I'm a can I cannot say  
That I know how to float."  
The lantern said "I'm bound to sink;"  
He gurgled in his throat.

"My business is to be a light—  
A weight I am." "That's so,"  
The oil can said, "You'll sink like lead,"  
In accents sad and slow.

"Did you observe," the lantern sighed,  
"What curious tastes they've got?"  
They took that mass of skin and bone,  
That nervous dog—that Shot."

"We shall be lost," they cried aloud,  
"When the flowing tide comes in!"  
The parson and his crew rowed off,  
Oh! what a shame and sin."

"They never gave a thought to us  
Who've lighted them and cooked,  
But in the dory they have gone  
Nor ever backward looked."

Oh, we're marooned, Oh, we're marooned!  
With no kind friend to save,  
On Wamblewreath consigned to rust,  
All by the sad sea wave.

Mahone Bay, September, 1913.

**An Auction**

The hall is bare, the sale is o'er,  
The auctioneer's harsh voice no more  
Comes rum-tum-tumming through my door  
With now and then a "gone ;"  
The carpets, chairs and general rack,  
The pictures, glass and bric-a-brac,  
Things good and things not worth a crack  
Have vanished one by one.

Some took their spoils away in drays,  
And some in phaetons drawn by bays,  
Some with an armful went their ways  
Grown sad in colder blood,  
And those who did not buy at all  
Leave chiefly pleased the auction hall.  
The ones who bought they foolish call,  
And laugh in mirthful mood.

Heavens ! how they bid ; they bought the books  
According to the binding's looks ;  
Writ for philosophers or cooks,  
Twas all the same to most ;  
Pictures whate'er their style or school  
They did not buy by merit's rules,—  
The name, the size, the frame, with fools  
Are things wherein they boast.

VERSES BY THE WAY

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And in an auction, as in life,  
Men long for what they get in strife,  
A book, a picture or a wife  
Seems like a jewel set  
In gold, when others want it too;  
From Winnipeg to Timbuctoo  
What one man strives for, others do  
Their very best to get.

Fraser Institute, Montreal,  
About 1890.



'87.

I saw the old year halt along,  
His pack upon his shoulder,  
He sang the fag end of an old sad song  
And the notes came hollow, weak and wrong,  
And the light of his eyes was a smoulder.

Feebly, feebly, he tottered by,  
But as he passed he knew me,  
"Ah, ha! poor friend," quoth he with a sigh,  
"I've complaints and sorrows of your's by the bye,  
Jumbled up in my pack," "Eighty-seven," said I,  
"You have, and lots, beshrew me."

"And where did we first meet," he said;  
"In London town," I replied,  
"You came in a fog as heavy as lead,  
Ghastly, horrible, damp and dread,  
You began but ill and you'll soon be dead  
And we'll all be gratified."

"Come now," said he, "you might be too severe."  
"Eighty-seven," said I, "I couldn't;  
Why just look, if you please, at the rheumatiz here,  
Now if I, like you, was a boss of the sphere  
I'd stop such things when I was the year,—  
I would, I'll be blowed if I wouldn't."

He pointed down to his halting gait  
(Each footstep made him lamer)  
"You see I share the general fate,  
We all get rheumatiz early or late,  
And as for the rest why its useless to prate,  
And silly to be a declaimer.

For you, remember, are only one,  
Of the many who fill my pack,  
Each puny mortal under the sun,  
The most that he can do has done,  
To load me with discontent by the ton.  
You've made me old e're my time is run,  
You've nearly broken my back."



The wintry night engulfed him, still  
Through wreaths of whirling snow,  
His faint, sad song came down the hill :  
" They'll think of me, though they speak me ill,  
When their ageing eyes with tears shall fill  
For loved friends lost when I was here,  
When Eighty-Seven was King of the year,  
In the land of long ago."

Montreal, 1st January, 1888



### Nightfall in the Woods

Slow the western sun declines;  
Darkness deepens in the wood;  
Shadows wrap the sombre pines;  
Summoned by her solemn mood  
Nature's vaulted temples wake  
Thoughts which poet never spake.

In the forest hollow, dark,  
Plainly the streamlet flows,  
Where the birch with ghastly bark  
Spectre-like its branches throws,  
And the lonely owlet's cry  
Breaks the silence mournfully.

High on yonder blasted trunk  
Strikes the sun's departing ray ;  
Now in purple distance sunk  
All his splendours fast decay,  
While the rising wind of night,  
Moaning, knells the dying light.

Bedeque Road, June 1874



### A Maple Leaf

Leaf that from the maple spray,  
Skyward stretching o'er the river,  
Fluttered where the wavelets play  
And the changing shadows shiver,  
Rustling never more in tune  
With the sunny woods of June.

Once thy face was glossy green  
Ere the autumn kisses found thee,  
Fair among thy sisters seen  
With the wood birds singing round thee,  
Glancing with a vernal grace  
Perfect in thy natal place.

But, when on thy tender youth  
Fell the flakes of crimson glory,  
Like the burning rays of truth  
On some loved romantic story,  
Olden ties too weak to stay  
Loosed thee—and thou slipped away.

Thee the scented breezes bore  
Glittering scarlet, glad to sever,  
Withered on the lonely shore  
All thy beauty gone for ever.

Toronto, November, 1880



### The Blue Bird's Song

Blithe, blithe, I fan my quivering wing  
In vales, through fields, by streams,  
And I sip the dews from the flowers whose hues  
Shine in the sun's warm beams.

My nest is hid in a mossy bank  
Where the meek-eyed violets blow,  
Buttercups bright with glistening light  
All round about it grow.

At hand my friends the robins dwell  
Aloft in the tall spruce tree,  
But I never aspire to live any higher  
For how could I happier be ?

From morning till night I chirrup in joy  
My heart is as gay as my song,  
The sunshine and breeze all uniting to please  
And the short hours slip charmed along.

So blithely I'll flutter my quivering wing  
In vales, through the meadows, by streams;  
I all happiness know in the sun's golden glow,  
In the glow of the sun's golden beams.



The pleasant morn in spring was bright  
When first I met my love,  
The fields in verdure soft were dight  
And music filled the grove ;  
Near her the mayflowers paled their hue,  
The birds as warbling by they flew  
Paused in their songs as if they knew  
Her voice did sweeter prove.

The wintry winds unceasing rave  
The scene is drear and chill,  
My love is in her silent grave  
Beside the lonely hill ;  
Cold as the winter's icy vest  
The ashes dark are in her breast,  
While I must wander on oppressed  
With never-changing ill.

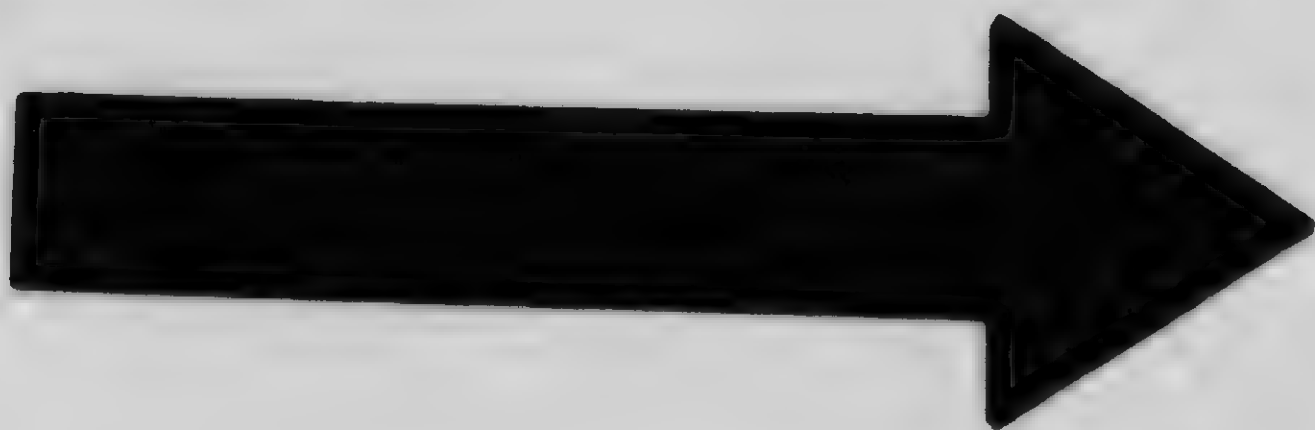
Boston, 1870



### **Ebening on the Ferry Wharf**

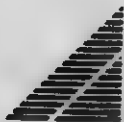
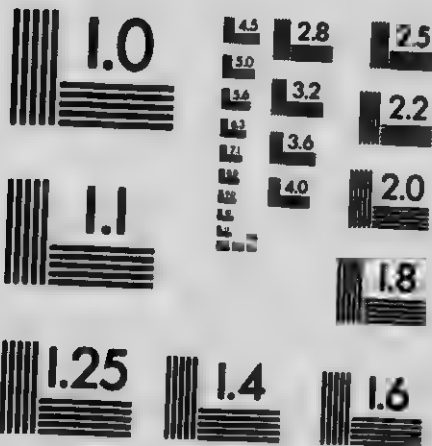
The air is thick, and sultry is the night,  
The moon's thin crescent gives a misty light,  
The little stars shine dimly overhead,  
And indistinctness over all is spread ;  
Calm creeps the river, glassy, still as death,  
For no cool wind disturbs it with a breath,  
It's face reflects the street lights of the town  
Which in a faint perspective glimmer down ;  
The river banks fade gradual away  
And blend afar in soft mysterious gray.

May 22nd, 1871



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**On a Boat Sail**

Soft on the landscape the night shadows fall,  
Rest and sweet peacefulness reign over all,  
Fades the last sun gleam of light from the sky,  
Calmly the pale moon keeps watch from on high,  
Faintly our oars keep time, smoothly we glide,  
Round like a fairy charm ripples the tide.

Blow, blow thou soft south wind fresh from the sea,  
Kissing the billows before thee that flee,  
Joy on thy pinions comes wafted along,  
Welcomed by laughter, and circled by song ;  
Pleasures, alas, like the breezes which sigh  
Soothe for a season then languish and die.

Now when the past and the future unite  
Rendering the path of our pilgrimage bright,  
Life like a heaven lit prospect appears,  
Freed from all sorrows, unsaddened by tears ;  
Oh ! might these visions bright never decay  
And such pleasures, with life only, vanish away.

July 4th, 1873





**Song**

Though the earth is clad in summer,  
 Though the skies are bright above,  
 All the light has left the landscape,  
 Thou art far away, my love.

Better far the chill November,  
 Wintry storms and prospects drear,  
 Summer flauntings mock my sadness,  
 Dearest, if thou art not near.

Fly ye months in swift progression !  
 Wither flowers and leaves decay !  
 Welcome now ye chilly breezes,  
 Bring again the happy day !

Bring again the happy moments  
 Faster whirl the rolling sphere,  
 Till the hour when next I meet her  
 In the autumn brown and sere.

August, 1875



**Winter**

Cold, cold, the wild winds blow,  
And dancing whirls of eddying snow  
Sweep through the lonely vale ;  
Fast falls the twilight gloom  
And night displays his sable plume  
And drapes the landscape pale ;  
Wandering through the pastures lone  
O'er ruined woods with solemn tone  
The winds, like wildered spirits moan,  
Despairing, sadly wail.

Winter, 1875

**From "Lines on a Diamond Ring."**

Here in its little hoop of beaten gold  
The diamond shines through many changing years,  
Midst light of love or anguished tears of old,  
Reflected in its surface as a glass  
Were faces troubled with life's hard endeavour,  
Or beauty's eyes once bright, now dim forever.

We wonder who they were in those old days  
Who hailed thee when at first thou didst appear !  
Who saw thee shine and spake the words of praise  
Which fell as music on thy master's ear !  
What were they ? handsome, merry, wise or witty ?  
All gone—we ne'er can know them—more's the pity.

But fancy in the magic of thy gleams  
Canst bid the shadows of the past arise,  
And happy friends who lived in happy dreams  
And sought the future in each other's eyes.  
Shine little gem, for thou shalt sparkle on  
For other eyes than ours when we are gone !

January, 1885



### Right Voice in the Camp

What is that agonizing moan, that wail  
As of some soul in piteous mortal pain  
That the pale camper hears on Wamblewreath  
At midnight on its lonely strand again ?  
Again it floats on the affrighted air !  
Do the black waters or the forest gloom  
Harbour the spectral visitants who thus despair,  
And signify from some forgotten tomb

Their sleepless vigil? Hark! once more it swells;  
Now it is lost or mingled with the sound  
Of wind-swept pines or surges on the shore,  
Dying in plaintive tones and sorrow without bound.  
And he who hears it can recall the tale  
How it is said, a hundred years ago  
The seamen of that fated bark went down  
In wild explosion. Was it even so?

Their latest accents rose when crazed with fear  
They knew their fate; that flight was all in vain  
And that on sea or land or deck once more  
They might not come as living souls again.  
And thus they make their immemorial moan,  
And from the pitying hearers thus can draw  
Some ghostly comfort in their world of shades,  
And claim remembrance in these tones of awe.

Wamblewreath, Mahone Bay  
September 1913



### The Toast of the Pen and Pencil Club, Montreal

Here's to the health of those who fail,  
Who never hit hope's squirmy nail  
One driving stroke: who steadily  
Are hammered on by destiny.

Clogged in the mire of circumstance,  
Peering through mists of dull mischance,  
Who if they any light descry,  
Seem but the more misled thereby.

May each, let's hope, thus tempered, grow  
Assured of where he wants to go ;  
Then spite of mire and wind and wet  
If plucky, why! he'll be there yet.



### On the Way from Glenmore to Westport

(Tune—Mandalay)

As down the road from dear Glenmore  
We drove that autumn day,  
The tinted leaves fell fluttering o'er  
The sunlit winding way,  
The pine trees fragrance toned the air,  
Sweet was the late mown hay,  
And e'en the horses thought it fair  
For Billie called the Bay,

## Chorus—

Old Billie called the Bay  
With many a pleasant neigh,  
Which meant in equine phrasing  
They're going soon away ;  
Old Billie called the Bay  
Cheer up old girl, I say,  
We'll soon be out a grazing—  
They are going soon hurrah !

As on we bowled by wood and farm  
Our hearts were hardened clay,  
Had they not yielded to the charm  
E'en in the shaky shay.  
We had to make us glad, also,  
The genial Mr. Gay  
Whose tales ho, ho ! so made us crow  
While Billie called the Bay.

## Chorus.

When all the townies home have gone  
In stifling towns to stay,  
For Billie and his mate come on  
Their well-earned holiday,  
Who gently browsing out at grass  
Give many a cheerful neigh,  
And kind as lover calls to lass  
Old Billie called the Bay.

September 13th, 1903.

**The Wanderer's Farewell**

Across the billowy sea of life,  
My fragile bark has held its way ;  
Through clouds of elemental strife,  
Where storms tempestuous stray.

Since first I left the distant port  
With sunshine glowing on my sail,  
I've seen the pilgrim's careless sport  
And heard the sufferers wail.

I've felt the joys all sometimes find,  
The woes that make the spirit dark,  
And doubts, those quicksands of the mind,  
Have oft beset my bark.

Each sun, that rose or set, has marked  
Me, traveller, swiftly speeding on,  
'Tis many a day since I embarked  
And I must soon be gone.

Ah I not without regret I turn  
From scenes that yielded such delight,  
Which made my heart within me burn  
And hope was lost in sight.

## VERSES BY THE WAY

When boundless as the ocean's flow  
Unfathomable as the deep,  
The tide of life would o'er me go  
And all in rapture steep.

Soon shall the earth, the sky, the sea,  
Cease speaking to this soul of mine ;  
And upland, valley, wood and le-  
Know me no more through time.

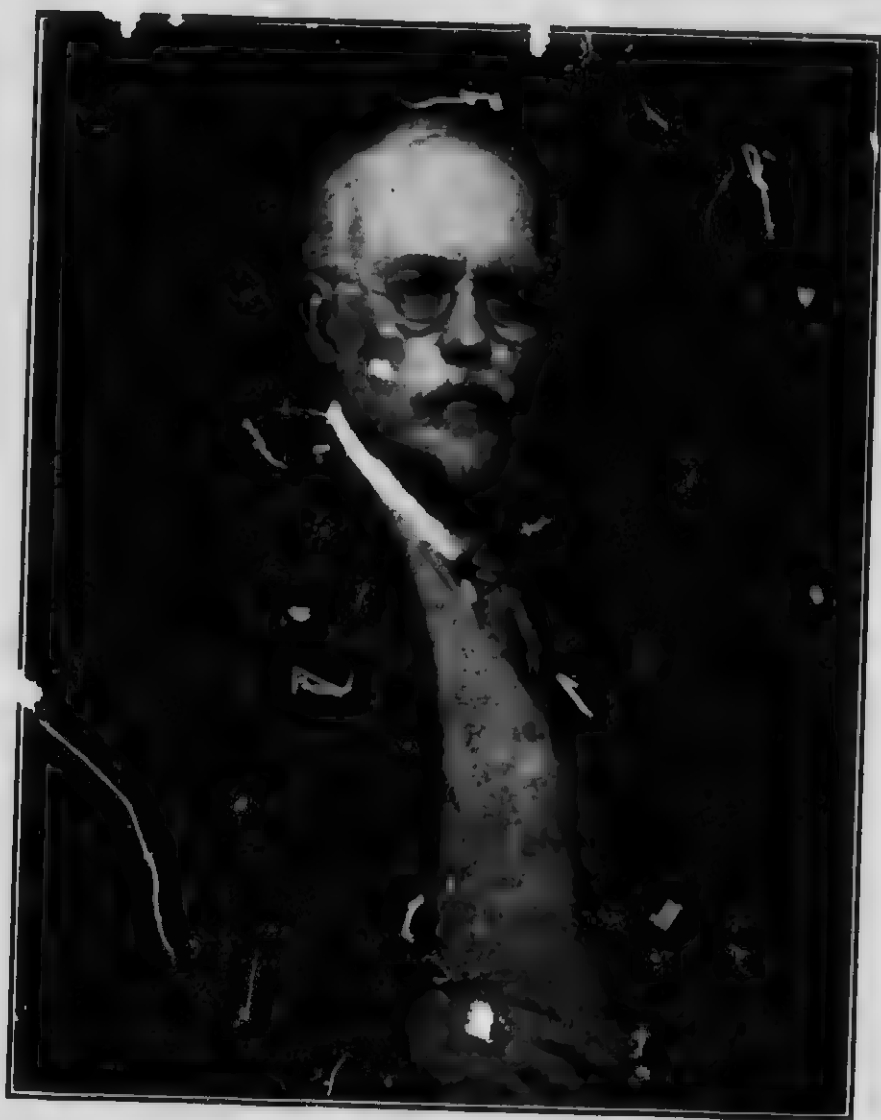
Ye woods, beneath whose shades I've roved  
So many a happy summer's day,  
Ye brooks and streams, by which I loved  
So oft to take my way ;

Ye hills, with tops that scale the sky,  
Dear vales and many a pleasant dell—  
For ye I heave a parting sigh  
And sadly say farewell.

Ye clouds, whose rolling march above  
And shadowy index o'er the plain,  
I've noted oft, and seen with love,  
But scarce shall see again.

Farewell, each earthly sight and sound  
My steps are near the unknown shore,  
The port of death is nearly found,  
I hear the breakers roar.





BERT HARRIS, C. M. G., R. C. A.

From Portrait by himself in National Gallery, Ottawa.



And when mine eyes forever close  
And forms of light no longer trace,  
Oh ! may I die while evening glows  
Its sunset on my face.



### Farewell Old Paths

Farewell old paths and wonted ways  
The spell of dear departed days  
Will spread o'er thee a golden haze  
As time goes bowling on ;  
And oft in meditative mood  
Memory with pensive wing shall brood  
Amidst the joys and sorrows strewed  
In hours forever gone.

I'll miss the walks at eve to view  
The vaulted heavens celestial hue,  
When dim the spired city grew  
And all its streets were still,  
The lonely stretch of marshy land,  
The mountain's gloom on either hand  
The darkened river's darker strand,  
The pine trees on the hill.

And "Music," goddess fair, can I  
Recall thy joys without a sigh?  
Ah! may the echoes never die  
But last while life remains;  
Songs I have heard which haunt me still  
Sweet as the syrens or the thrill  
Which circles round the muses' hill,  
Sublime, seraphic strains.

When all the deepest joys of love  
Or ecstasy or sorrow move,  
Or faith exalts its hymn above  
Triumphant over death,  
And the tranced listener's heart obeys  
Quick answering to the witching lays,  
Like some æolian lyre when strays  
The evening's wandering breath.

And art! ah well, too well, I know  
How hard to lose thy varied glow,  
The thousand beauties to forego  
Which all the spirit fired;  
Oft in my dreams, awake, asleep,  
With memory I will vigil keep,  
Strive to renew the raptures deep  
The master's work inspired.

Again in quiet halls I'll muse  
Where noisy cares no more confuse,  
And lost in contemplation lose  
Myself in loving thee ;  
Then even thought itself shall die  
The out-grown bonds of time defy  
And borne by mighty spirits fly  
Through all the centuries free.

Joys, in whose sphere I loved to dwell,  
I bid you now a fond farewell,  
But lifted never be your spell  
Nor dimmed your cheering ray :  
Oh ! light the path ; the waves divide ;  
In apathy still be my guide ;  
And point me o'er the deserts wide  
On to the wished for way.

Halifax,  
March 24th, 1874.



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